

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 227959

21

ORIGIN AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-04 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-01 OMB-01

CEA-01 COME-00 FRB-01 XMB-02 OPIC-06 LAB-01 SIL-01

PC-01 AGR-05 SWF-01 /080 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W-JMSEGARS:DFP

APPROVED BY AF/W-JLLOUGHRAN

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R 162243Z OCT 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

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E.O. 11652: E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, IMF, IBRD, SL

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DEVELOPMENT MINISTER PRATT

1. DESPITE ASSURANCES FROM EMBASSY OF SIERRA LEONE THAT ALL FIVE MEMBERS OF DELEGATION WOULD BE PRESENT AT MEETINGS, ONLY PRATT, PERMANENT SECRETARY NYLANDER, AND EMBASSY ECON OFFICER ATTENDED. ALTHOUGH SIERRA LEONEANS CONSISTENTLY LATE FOR APPOINTMENTS, MEETINGS WENT WELL, WITH PRATT GIVING ENTHUSIASTIC BRIEFINGS TO DR. ADAMS, AID, AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE. GROUP ALSO CALLED ON OPIC AND PEACE CORPS, BUT UNABLE TO KEEP EXIM BANK APPOINTMENT. SCHEDULING PROBLEMS PREVENTED VISIT TO COMMERCE.

2. PRATT TOLD ADAMS AND BLAKE THAT OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO IMF/IBRD MEETINGS PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY HIS BRIEFING SENIOR USG OFFICIALS ON GOSL'S NEW DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND TO PERSONALLY PRESENT COPIES OF PLAN. HE STRES-

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SED PLAN'S EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OVER NEXT

FIVE-YEARS WITH OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN RICE PRODUCTION, WHICH IN TURN WOULD PERMIT SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN IMPORT OTHER BASIC FOODSTUFFS.

3. AT OPIC PRATT EMPHASIZED FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PLAN STATING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DEVELOP SIERRA LEONE'S RESOURCES

WITHOUT EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE. PRATT HOPEFUL THAT OF 750 MILLION DOLLARS NEEDED TO FINANCE PLAN, TWO-THIRDS CAN BE RAISED INTERNALLY WITH REMAINING 250 MILLION COMING FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES, MAINLY IN FORM OF PRIVATE INVESTMENTS. PRATT TOLD OPIC OFFICIALS GOSL DOES NOT INTEND NATIONALIZE HOLDINGS OF PRIVATE INVESTORS AND GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN THEM WOULD RANGE FROM MODEST 10 PERCENT TO NO MORE THAN 51 PERCENT. HE REFERRED TO SIERRA RUTILE WHICH HE SAID WHOLLY-OWNED BY BETHLEHEM STEEL AND NORD RESOURCES AS EXAMPLE GOSL'S MODERATION ON NATIONALIZATION. PRATT TOLD GROUP RUTILE EXPORTATION ALREADY STARTED WITH BETHLEHEM EXPECTING EXPORT 4-5 MILLION DOLLARS RUTILE THIS YEAR.

COMMENT: OVERALL RESPONSE TO PRATT'S PRESENTATION, WHILE NOT NEGATIVE, WAS NONCOMMITTAL. HE COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH US CURRENTLY HAMPERED BY PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, USG STILL IN POSITION TO RENDER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES STRUGGLING TO ACHIEVE SOME SORT OF ECONOMIC PARITY. PRATT'S COMMENTS ON SIERRA RUTILE TOGETHER WITH OUTLINE GOSL PLANS FOR NATIONALIZATION OF PRIVATE INVESTMENTS, APPEAR INCONSISTENT WITH CURRENT TRENDS. DEPARTMENT WELCOMES EMBASSY COMMENTS. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FINANCIAL COOPERATIVES, VISITS, MEETINGS, FINANCIAL DATA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE227959
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JMSEGARS:DFF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740295-0373
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741041/aaaabiwp.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF DEVELOPMENT MINISTER PRATT
TAGS: EFIN, SL, IMF, IBRD, (PRATT)
To: FREETOWN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005